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2 February 2011

Dr York CHOW Yat-ngok, GBS, JP  
Secretary for Food and Health  
Food and Health Bureau  
19/F & 20/F, Murray Building  
Garden Road  
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Dr CHOW,

**Panel on Health Services**

**Special meeting on 15 February 2011**

I write as Chairman of the Panel on Health Services to invite your presence at the captioned meeting to be held at 2:30 pm.

Principal Officials have a constitutional obligation to explain government policies and answer members' questions at Panel meetings. Members have expressed grave dissatisfaction that neither your goodself nor your Under Secretary was present at the meeting of the Panel on 17 January 2011 to explain the policy on the regulation of proprietary Chinese medicine ("pCm") and answer questions from members and deputations attending the meeting.

The implementation of mandatory registration of pCm is conducive to safeguard public health and consumer rights, and essential to the further development of Chinese medicines. However, the Chinese medicine trade faces great difficulty, in terms of technical and financial viability, in proving the product safety, efficacy and quality when applying for registration of pCm. The trade has pointed out that there are substantial differences between Chinese medicines and Western medicines in terms of their principles and applications, and the regulatory system for Chinese

medicine has failed to take into account the differences as well as the long history of Chinese medicine and the past practice of the trade. They are concerned that the lack of support from the Government to assist the trade in meeting the testing requirements for the purpose of registration of pCm is at variance with the Government's commitment to foster the development of Chinese medicine and promote the Chinese medicine testing services in Hong Kong.

As the official responsible for the policy matter, your presence at the Panel meeting to understand the specific concerns of members and the trade is essential to enable you to formulate policies which meet public expectations. This responsibility cannot be discharged by representatives of the Department of Health on your behalf.

As the Panel will continue to receive views from deputations and further discuss the subject at the special meeting on 15 February 2011, the Panel has requested your attendance at the meeting. I look forward to your early reply.

Yours sincerely,

(Dr LEUNG Ka-lau)  
Chairman  
Panel on Health Services